

PEACEMAKER

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 17, 1997

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, for the past 2 years, Senator George Mitchell has co-chaired the multiparty talks on the future of Northern Ireland in Belfast. On the evening of March 13, 1997, in Washington, DC, he was presented the American Ireland Fund International Humanitarian Award. I would like to share Senator Mitchell's inspiring speech with you at this time.

EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS BY SENATOR GEORGE J. MITCHELL, AMERICAN-IRELAND FUND DINNER

I'm grateful for this award. The American-Ireland Fund is an important force for good in Ireland. I commend you for your efforts and I encourage you to continue them.

As you know, I've spent most of the past two years in Northern Ireland. On my trips back to the U.S., I've been asked two questions, over and over again, by Americans who care about Ireland: Why are you doing this? And, What can I do to help?

Tonight, I'll try to answer both of those questions.

Why am I doing this?

I've asked myself that question many times. To answer it, I must go back nearly 20 years, before I'd ever been to Ireland, before I'd ever thought seriously about Northern Ireland.

Before I entered the United States Senate I had the privilege of serving as a Federal Judge. In that position I had great power. The power I most enjoyed exercising was when I presided over what are called naturalization ceremonies. They're citizenship ceremonies. A group of people who'd come from every part of the world, who'd gone through all the required procedures, gathered before me in a federal courtroom. There I administered to them the oath of allegiance to the United States and, by the power vested in me under our constitution and laws I made them Americans.

It was always emotional for me, because my mother was an immigrant from Lebanon, my father the orphan son of immigrants from Ireland. They had no education and they worked hard all their lives at difficult and low-paying jobs. But because of their efforts, and, more importantly, because of the openness of American society, I, their son, was able to become the majority leader of the United States Senate.

After every naturalization ceremony, I spoke personally with each new American, individually or in family groups. I asked them where they came from, how they came, why they came. Their stories were as different as their countries of origin. But they were all inspiring, and through them ran a common theme, best expressed by a young Asian. When I asked why he had come, he replied, in slow and halting English, "I came because here in America everybody has a chance".

A young man who'd been an American for just a few minutes summed up the meaning of our country in a single sentence. Here, everybody has a chance.

I was one of those who had a chance, and I thank God for my good fortune. Now, by an accident of fate, in a way that I did not seek or expect, I have been given the opportunity to help others to have a chance. That they are in Ireland, the land of my father's heritage, is just a fortuitous coincidence. That I am able to help, even if in just a small way, is what matters.

No one can really have a chance in a society dominated by fear and violence. And so I, who have been helped by so many, now must do what I can to help others to try to end the violence, to banish the fear, to hasten the day when all the people of Northern Ireland can lead lives of peace, reconciliation and opportunity.

Let me say, as clearly and as emphatically as I can: There will be peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. I don't know exactly when it will come. But I am convinced that it is inevitable, for one over-riding reason: It is the will of the overwhelming majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

They remain divided along sectarian lines, and they mistrust each other. But they share a fervent desire not to return to the violence which for so long has filled their lives with fear and anxiety.

It will take a very long time for the mistrust to end. But it need not take a long time for the violence to end. Once it does, once people can live free of fear, then gradually the walls of division will come down. Walls that exist on the ground, and in people's minds, will come down, brick by brick, person by person, slowly but inevitably.

Over the past two years I've come to know the people of Northern Ireland. They're energetic, intelligent and productive. I admire and like them. They deserve better than the troubles they have. But there is only one way to achieve that better life.

There is no alternative to democratic, meaningful, inclusive dialogue. For that to come about, there must be an end to violence and to intransigence. They are the twin demons of Northern Ireland—violence and intransigence. They feed off each other in a deadly ritual in which most of the victims are innocent.

There are those who don't want anything to change, ever. They want to recreate a past that can never be recreated. But their way will only guarantee never-ending conflict. It will insure that the next half century is as full of death and fear as was the past half century.

The people of Northern Ireland must make it clear to their leaders that they oppose intransigence, that they want meaningful negotiation. Not capitulation; not the surrender of conviction. But good-faith negotiation that places the interest of the people, the interest of peace, above personal or political considerations. Good faith negotiation can produce an agreed settlement that will command the support of the majority in Northern Ireland, including the majority in each community. I know in my heart that it can be done.

TRIBUTE TO KIWANIS CLUB'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 17, 1997

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the Kiwanis Club of Warren, MI, as they celebrate their 40th anniversary on May 9, 1997.

In 1957, a group of concerned Warren citizens felt there was a need to join Kiwanis International and form the Kiwanis Club of Warren. Their goal was to aid the public in ways that other charities and the Government could not.

In the past 40 years, the Kiwanis Club has contributed their time and resources to the betterment of their community. Among their

many contributions include the funding of a handicapped fitness trail at the Council Park and the donation of a Salvation Army bus. The club has also donated funds for thousands of individuals in need of operations, utility bills, and handicapped ramps.

I would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers, past and present, who have donated their various talents to improve the quality of life in the Warren community. The self-sacrificing qualities of the Kiwanis volunteers is what makes our communities successful.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing the Kiwanis Club of Warren a joyful 40th anniversary. Their long history of public service is sure to last at the very least, another 40 years.

HONORING STATE REPRESENTATIVE KEITH MCCALL

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 17, 1997

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a close personal friend and colleague from my congressional district in Pennsylvania, State Representative Keith McCall.

Representative McCall will be honored by the Panther Valley Irish American Association as its 1997 recipient of the Shamrock Award. I am pleased to have been asked to participate in this prestigious event.

The youngest son of the late Representative Thomas J. and Mary Ann McCall, Keith began his career in the Pennsylvania State Auditor General's office in Harrisburg while he was attending Penn State and Harrisburg Community College. His father's untimely death in 1981, while serving his fourth State legislative term, brought Keith to succeed his father in the Assembly. Now a high ranking Representative in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Keith has followed in his father's footsteps by serving his district for 15 years.

Keith McCall is one of the finest legislators that I have had the privilege to work with during my years in Congress. He has been responsible for helping numerous local constituents and bringing millions of dollars in economic development to his district.

Keith's hard work and tenacity on numerous issues of importance to his district demonstrates his commitment to his constituents. His attention to the needs of the residents of his legislative district is unsurpassed and manifests itself in the strong results he receives.

Keith has consistently worked closely with me on numerous projects for Carbon County, from flood control to highway projects, I can always count on Keith to be an energetic ally with all the projects that involve the state.

A few of his major projects and accomplishments include Lehigh Gorge State Park, rail infrastructure improvements, a visitors center for Delaware and Lehigh Navigation Canal National Heritage Corridor, and preservation of historical buildings.

In the State Assembly Keith wrote the Pennsylvania Enhanced Automobile Emission Inspection law and is now considered an expert on this issue.